

I was previously very unhappy in life. My mind always seemed to be occupied with grievances, and more grievances. Why am I so short? Why must I be tortured with boring piano lessons? If only I had gotten more marks for this test! The list could go on and on.

Thankfully, my mother knocked some sense into me. She told me, “Life is not a bed of roses. Just be contented with what you have.” I realized she was right. The Spanish proverb cannot be any truer: “Since we cannot get what we like, let us like what we can get”. This, I believe.

I feel that contentment changed me into a better person. I learnt to let go of my dissatisfactions and adopt a happier, healthier mindset in life. I started to look at the bright side of things, thereby helping me to accept things for what they were, and myself for who I am.

I was short. Do you know what I dreaded to hear most every year on the first day of school? “Class, please line up according to your height...” I knew without doubt where I would end up—the very front of the queue. Standing at 142 centimeters now, my position in the queue has never changed. Physically, I may still be short, but mentally, not anymore.

In the past, every time it came to measuring height and weight, I would feel very depressed hearing my friends happily announcing how much they had ‘sprouted’. I would feel lousy and small being sandwiched in a crowd. Seeing throngs of people towering over me, and having to smell their armpits, was not something very pleasant to do. However, I realized that there was no point harping over my height. I should just let things take its natural course and not make myself miserable. With a positive mindset, I realized that being short actually gave me certain advantages! I was given the ‘VIP’ seats in class, which probably disciplined me to pay full attention in class. I couldn’t get away catching forty winks while under the teacher’s nose, could I?

In addition, I can now better accept an A over an A*, with the changed mindset that the effort mattered more than the marks. I also learnt to be satisfied and appreciate my piano lessons. Better still, I am starting to enjoy it!

Nothing beats contentment. Just the other day, when I met my friend from the Math and Science talent program, she asked whether I regretted not opting for the program, since those were my interests. I immediately knew my answer. True, by making this choice, I will not be taught by my favourite teacher from last year, nor will I be the same class as my friends, but I have my reasons and am contented with my decision. In fact, I am actually glad to be in this class with all my new classmates and teachers.

Contentment equates to happiness. Be contented. This I believe.